

Conclusion



North Carolina is geographically blessed with ample precipitation in normal times. If the state manages its water resources properly, they can be a huge comparative advantage to the economy and the quality of life in the state. Almost all experts predict significant conflict over scarce water in much of the world, including the United States, in the near future.

However, the legacy of this ample water supply is a set of institutions, laws, and policies that do not deal very well with places and times of water scarcity. Even in North Carolina, as in the rest of the southeast, there are likely to be many more such places and times in the decades to come.

The recommendations in this 2008 report of the Water Allocation Study would build on the water resource laws, institutions, and policies already in place in North Carolina to protect economic investments and the state's environment. The study team believes that adoption of these recommendations would greatly help ensure the long-term future of quality of life in North Carolina. The study team stands ready to assist the legislature and the many stakeholders on these issues as they discuss and debate these recommendations.